Number 28

BAR HILL NEWSLETTER

1st February 1971

The monthly bulletin of the
Bar Hill Residents Association,
distributed to all residents

New Residents

We welcome this month:

Mr. and Mrs. Bewley, 18 Oatlands Avenue
Mr. and Mrs. Budd, 22 Oatlands Avenue
Mr. and Mrs. Fiske, 32 Oatlands Avenue
Mr. and Mrs. Levitt, 27 Oatlands Avenue
Mr. and Mrs. Smith, 12 Almond Grove
Mr. and Mrs. Stanger-Moore, 26 Oatlands Avenue
Mr. and Mrs. Vandercruysen, 21 Oatlands Avenue.

Already we have Mr. and Mrs. Page living temporarily at 28 Otter Close, and Mr. and Mrs. Eastell at 8 Otter Gardens, who will be moving into their new houses when they are completed, on Phase Hethersett.

Gardening Club

The Residents Association has arranged a meeting on Tuesday, 9th February at 8 p.m. in one of the school classrooms. The meeting is intended to inaugurate a Gardening Club in the Village, if sufficient people attend to warrant its formation. It is not intended that the Gardening Club should be part of the Residents Association - we are simply offering assistance and support to it in the initial stages; thereafter it will operate as a separate entity. Possible objectives of the Club include:

Bulk purchase of equipment, peat, fertilizer, plants, rock, paving slabs, etc. Meetings, with talks by local experts. Visits to nurseries, gardens, etc. Village Garden Competitions.

Women's Institute

The next meeting is a Surprise Meeting, on Thursday, 4th February at 7.45 p.m. in the school. So come along, and see!

BaHDS
(Bar Hill Drama Society)

Owing to the resignation of Sheila Willows as instructress, the drama group no longer exists as an official evening class. The production of "Miranda" postponed in November through licensing difficulties has now been cancelled. However a nucleus of members feel that it would be a pity if the BaHDS disappeared entirely, and intend starting an independent society if sufficient support can be obtained.

It is hoped initially to hold informal play readings which, combined with group discussions and self-analysis, we hope, will lead to limited public performances in the not too distant future.

Anybody, however inexperienced, will be welcome, so if you have any acting, producing or directing ability, however latent, or even just like to hear the sound of your own voice, please let me know. I hope to arrange a meeting soon. Peter Headland, 19 Almond Grove.

Modifications to Gas-Fired Central Heating System

Following recent visits to the Village of representatives of Eastern Gas, at least one resident has received a recorded-delivery letter, in which the gas board disclaim responsibility for what they appear to consider to be a faulty heating system.

Anyone who has had a similar experience and wishes to take advantage of a joint approach to solving the problem with the authorities concerned is invited to get in touch with a member of the Residents Association Committee.

Letters

This month we are again printing letters, of a possible controversial nature, from a resident of the Village. They are obviously a cry from the heart of the writer, and there will no doubt be readers who will agree with many of the points raised in them. Replies to and comments on these letters (or, of course, any other of this month's items) should be sent to the editor, John Wills, at 45 Acorn Avenue, telephone Crafts Hill 551.
(We should point out that, since these letters were sent in, we have also received a report from the Parish Council which may answer certain points.)

Village News

As we have said more than once, we are very pleased to print notices from all organisations and bodies in Bar Hill, advertising and reporting on their activities.

If you think the Newsletter is not as useful and informative as it could be, then please tell us so - but please let us know, too, what is going on in the Village, so that we have the chance to print it. We have some regular contributors, to whom we are very grateful, but we should still welcome more.

There was an understandable shortage of contributions over the Christmas holidays, and therefore no January issue; but we do in principle aim to produce the Newsletter at the beginning of each month, and would be glad to receive items a week before then. Please send them to the editor, John Wills, 45 Acorn Avenue (C.H. 551)

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Playgroup

As you may have seen from the Cambridge Evening News (Saturday, 30th January), our application for a loan from the County Council, which had been turned down by the Finance Committee, was discussed at Saturday's Council meeting and referred back for reconsideration. Councillor Mr. H. Percival and Councillor Mrs. H. Leakey are working on our behalf and things are beginning to look more hopeful.

The Developers have now given us a site adjacent to the School and we are going ahead with our application for planning permission. I hope to arrange a meeting for parents and those interested in the Playgroup in the next week or two, and a notice will go up on the Village notice board.

Future money-raising events are an Easter Fair in the School hall on Saturday, 3rd April, in the afternoon, and a Jumble Sale in Cambridge market on Thursday, April 29th. I would like to thank all those who helped with the Coffee Morning recently, which raised nearly £8.

Pamela Lakin

Parish Council

New Council Members. Following the resignations of Mrs. King and Mr. Lancaster the Parish Council has co-opted Mrs. Small and Mrs. Purvey to the Council. In welcoming them the Council expressed its warm thanks to the outgoing members for their work. The composition of the Council is now:

Mr. W. Norton (Chairman)	21 Acorn Avenue
Mrs. M. Purvey	38 Otter Close
Mrs. B. Small	25 Gladeside
Mr. R. Dale	16 Almond Grove
Mr. C. Lakin	22 Almond Grove

Members of the Council are always available to discuss Village problems with residents. They are to meet shortly with the Committee of the Residents Assn. to discuss the respective roles of the two bodies and improved co-operation between them.

Village Green. The Parish Council is continuing its negotiations in connection with the proposed Village Green. The Developers have agreed to convey the land to the Council, and the Rural District Council will assist with the cost of levelling, draining and seeding. The only issue now to be resolved is whether the Developers will contribute to this cost. The RDC are now discussing the matter direct with the Developers, but the Parish Council is maintaining pressure to ensure that the matter is brought to a successful conclusion as quickly as possible. The Parish Council is very concerned at the lack of sports facilities for young people in the Village and the question of some temporary arrangements pending the completion of the Green is being discussed with the Developers.

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Parish Council (contd.)

A 604. The Council has not raised any objection to the proposed upgrading of the A 604 to motorway standard, and is now taking up with the County Highways Department the possibility of giving priority to the Bar Hill section of the road in view of the recognised traffic hazard now existing.

Street Lights. The Developers have assured the Parish Council that a revised lighting programme has been prepared and this includes the lighting of the spine path from Phase 2A to the shopping centre. The Council will press for the work to be done as soon as possible, but the question of lighting is tied up with the adoption of the footpath by the local authority.

Burst Water Mains. The asbestos or PVC water pipes used in the building are those approved and installed by the water board; in Bar Hill the pressure in the pipes is unusually high, since the water has to be carried uphill, in the direction of Dry Drayton.

Old People's Dwellings. Progress has been held up by the discovery of a water main running across the proposed site; the Council learned that plans for the buildings (which it had criticised) have been changed.

C. Lakin

Letters

Dear Sir,

In this and the next letter I would like to raise some points for discussion and also present some of my own views.

My main concern is that of maintenance money, which every Villager is expected to pay. This money, I believe, is for maintenance and upkeep of the Village facilities and I hope that this does not include either the installation of new facilities (such as the creation of the park, installation of lighting or laying of pathways) or the upkeep of unsold properties. Neither do I feel it should be used for the upkeep of the roads (a matter surely between the developers and the local council) or such faults and breakages due to mistakes or accidents of the contractors' employees. Whilst in no way accusing the Developers, I feel that some statement by them about the amounts and uses of money spent would be appreciated by many of the Villagers.

If my assumptions in the previous paragraph are correct, then the Developers could at best be said to have taken a pitiful interest in the Village. During the past year and speaking as someone looking through Phase 2 eyes, I can at the present time recall only the following maintenance:- mowing of the park an adequate number of times; mowing of other more established (and perhaps more neglected) grass an inadequate number of times; tidying of paths once; mending of television aerial again and again and again . . . (although sometimes caused by contractors' machines); one attack on the waste land weeds but, unfortunately, just before they went to seed; planting of some replacement trees near the site office; removal of a derelict tractor and the replacement of a cracked flag in the path.

The installation of facilities in the past year as far as I can see amounts to:- 1 park seeded, of which one section appears to have been violently returned to nature by some vehicle at about the same time as the above mentioned flag (in the adjoining path) was broken and the laying of about 30 yards of path on Phase 2.

The matter which requires the most urgent attention is that of lighting. Two areas immediately spring to mind. The more important of these is the spine path which could almost be described as murderously unlit and which the Developers promised would be attended to by last September. The other is of course the peripheral road, although at least part of this seems to be being attended to. Some interesting runs of steps in Phase 2 also remain dangerously unlit.

The results of the recent burst main in Phase I would seem to indicate either an inadequacy in the drainage or in its upkeep.

I wish now to speak as an inhabitant of Otter Gardens (who has waited for more than 6 months for attention to minor faults in his house). We are still waiting to be recognised as not being in Otter Close, but no street sign seems to be forthcoming. Only 1 street light illuminates Otter Gardens, and this I measured at 38 paces from the end of the Gardens and in measuring the current length of Otter Gardens (43 paces) I walked off the path twice at 20.00 on 16th January, simply because I could not see it. In the garage area used by

the majority of people in Otter Gardens the grid provided has been sited in such a place as not to drain it.

I personally shall not dwell on the discomfort to which the Hethersett inhabitants are subjected, believing that a non-sufferer cannot adequately describe pain, but anyone with wellingtons and, at night, a torch, who has been there will appreciate my point.

If one ignores "earthworks" then there is a total of three rather pathetic play areas for young children, although a fourth along with three rather deep pools will be available when the park is opened. These children must however be regarded as fortunate compared with their older counterparts who seem to have only two sets of scaffolding called "goal-posts".

The school and no doubt in the future the church seem to be not unwilling to house many of the communal activities which occur in the Village, but surely with the new spate of building which is now happening (with its corresponding welcome increase in population) the time is rapidly approaching when a Village communal and sports centre will be an absolute necessity. This point is glaringly raised by the minuteness of the library and the fact that the playgroup is virtually out in the cold. I should however balance this paragraph by saying that in my view the responsibility should not be laid entirely at the developers' feet, a point to which I will refer in my second letter.

To conclude, I would like to say that I still believe that this Village has tremendous potential as an exciting place to live in and is being built according to what appears to be an excellent concept in planning. As the Village is being created from virgin land the developers have at their control a unique chance to make their mark in Bar Hill, but they also bear a big responsibility. It seems therefore a great pity that they have neglected the landscaping of the Village and thereby generated a bad feeling amongst many Villagers which is not difficult to detect. With not much effort on their behalf I believe that the developers could soon recreate goodwill in the Village and also be more able to sell the Village as opposed to the houses to potential inhabitants.

Yours etc.,

E. Taylor

Dear Sir,

I should like in this letter to take a look at the Residents Association, and first of all I shall state that my interest is only that of a normal member of it.

Last year F.R.A. wrote two letters, and at the end of the second expressed the hope that the Association would be better. I heartily agree, believing that it could and should act as a vital organising instrument in the Village, both in the sense of being in close touch with all the other groups and clubs here, and also being a vital channel for distributing information to and from residents. As the voice of the Village, its ability to present a loud and credible message must depend on the size of its membership, and I would urge as many residents as possible to support this valuable instrument which we have, so that its full potential can be attained.

One of its major roles at the current time is that of dealing on our behalf with the developers and because of the apparent deafness in that quarter I am coming to think that perhaps the Association should take a stronger attitude towards them. I am sure that many residents could suggest ways of doing this.

An apparently widespread opinion is that the Committee is both distant and relatively inactive; I feel that this is because to a large extent the Committee hides its light under a bushel: a more comprehensive monthly statement by the Association in the Newsletter would certainly be worthwhile. A more active encouragement of contributors would also liven it up and I suggest that a reprint of the excellent article on gardening (December 1969) would be a very good start. Further suggestions: the Association should father groups for specific problems, such as the needs of the various sports and recreational clubs; more than just one general meeeting per year should be held.

My original theme was that the difficulties lie with us Villagers; one of the reasons that I feel competent to write this, is that I have been as apathetic as anyone else. Ample evidence was seen when the Village festival had to be cancelled last year; I'm sure that many people hope, as I do, that last year's failure will not deter the BHRA from trying again.

I repeat, this Village is a good place to live in, with good people, and is going to get better as time goes on. To do so, however, we must help it, and how better than through the Residents Association.

Yours etc., E. Taylor